

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 IO-14 JUSE-00 NSAE-00

RSC-01 SNM-02 SY-03 TRSE-00 USIA-15 NSC-07 SCI-06

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R 091456Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5995

INFO DEA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 2546

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, AR

SUBJECT: NARCOTICS - CONATON EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OUSTED IN SHAKE
UP IN SOCIAL WELFARE

1. ONCE AGAIN ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE ARGENTINE POLITICAL
LABYRINTH HAVE WORKED TO THE DETRIMENT OF AN ENHANCED GOA
NARCOTICS PROGRAM. ON APRIL 8 DR HECTOR LAURENCE INFORMED AN
EMBASSY OFFICER THAT ON APRIL 5 HE HAD BEEN DISMISSED AS

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF CONATON, THE INTERMINISTERIAL BOARD FOR
POLICY MATTERS RELATING TO NARCOTICS. THE DISMISSAL IS
EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY. NO SUCCESSOR HAS BEEN NAMED.

2. ACCORDING TO LAURENCE, VIRTUALLY ALL THE SENIOR STAFF AT
THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL WELFARE WERE SIMILARLY DISMISSED IN A
CHAIN OF EVENTS WHICH BEGAN IN EARLY MARCH IN CORDOBA
PROVINCE, WHEN INFIGHTING BETWEEN THE PERONIST RIGHT AND LEFT
FORCED THE GOVERNOR OUT OF OFFICE. SOCIAL WELFARE SECRETARY
FOR COORDINATION BRUNELLO (ALLEGEDLY AN ADHERENT OF ECONOMIC
MINISTER GELBARD'S FACTION) WAS NAMED INTERVENTOR (ADMINISTRATOR)
OF CORDOBA PROVINCE, AND WAS REPLACED ON MARCH 28 AT SOCIAL
WELFARE BY CARLOS ALEJANDRO GUSTAVO VILLONA (SUPPOSEDLY THE
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FORMER PRIVATE SECRETARY TO LOPEZ REGA). THE SECRETARY FOR

COORDINATION SERVES AS THE LINK BETWEEN CONATON'S EXECUTIVE SECRETARY AND THE MINISTER, WHO IS ITS PRESIDENT. AS LAURENCE TELLS IT, VILLONA ORDERED, UNDER A NEW REDUNDANCY LAW, THE IMMEDIATE DISMISSAL OF VIRTUALLY ALL SENIOR STAFF UNDER HIS JURISDICTION, REGARDLESS OF PERSONAL OR PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION. LAURENCE STATED THAT THE POSITIONS WOULD BE FILLED BY PERSONS LOYAL TO VILLONA AND/OR LOPEZ REGA.

3. ALSO ON THE INITIAL LIST BY VIRTUE OF HIS POSITION WAS DR CARLOS CAGLIOTTI, HIGHLY QUALIFIED AND MOTIVATED DIRECTOR OF THE NEW GOA DRUG ABUSE CENTER (BA 2434). WHEN HE BECAME AWARE OF THE LIST, CAGLIOTTI USED THE SERVICES OF SOME HIGHLY PLACED PERONISTA FRIENDS TO HAVE HIS NAME DELETED AT THE LAST MINUTE. LAURENCE HAD NO SUCH FRIENDS IN TOWN AT THE TIME AND HE IS NOW DEBATING WHETHER TO SEEK SUCH SUPPORT FOR REINSTATEMENT, AN EFFORT THAT HE ESTIMATES HAS VIRTUALLY NO CHANCE OF SUCCESS, ASSUMING HE TRIES TO HANG ON.

4. COMMENT. THE DISMISSAL OF LAURENCE IS A DEFINITE SETBACK TO EFFORTS AIMED AT ACHIEVING AN ENHANCED GOA EFFORT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. ALTHOUGH IT WILL IN NO WAY AFFECT DIRECT ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES, IT REMOVES FROM THE SCENE THE ONE GOA OFFICIAL WITH THE DETAILED KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORKINGS OF THE GOVERNMENT WITH RESPECT TO NARCOTICS POLICY. FURTHER, IT COULD NOT HAVE COME AT A WORSE TIME. LAURENCE WAS ALSO THE ONLY PERSON WITHIN THE CURRENT GOA BUREAUCRACY WHO WAS FULLY CONVERSANT WITH BOTH THE PLANNING AND THE DETAILS OF THE PROPOSED AGREEMENTS FOR USG COMMODITY INPUTS INTO THE GOA ENFORCEMENT COMMUNITY. EVEN ASSUMING A QUALIFIED SUCCESSOR IS NAMED QUICKLY, IT WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY TAKE SOME TIME FOR HIM TO GRASP FULLY ALL THE COMPLEXITIES INVOLVED. DESPITE THE NEW INTEREST OF LOPEZ REGA (BA 2433) THIS ACTION BY HIS UNDERLING IS A DEFINITE MINUS IN THE ARGENTINE PROGRAM.
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